



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 4, 2010

CONTACT:
Sue Walitsky 202-224-4524 or
202-320-0819

CARDIN DISTURBED BY LACK OF PREPAREDNESS FOR RESPONDING TO WMD ATTACKS

*Hearing Examined Recent Inspector General Report
Saying DOJ Largely Unprepared for WMD Attack*

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), Chairman of the Judiciary Terrorism and Homeland Security Subcommittee, held a subcommittee hearing today to review a recent report of the Inspector General of the Justice Department. The May 2010 report, entitled “Review of the Department’s Preparation to Respond to a WMD Incident,” concluded that “the Department of Justice as a whole...has not implemented adequate WMD response plans. As a result, the Department is not fully prepared to provide a coordinated response to a WMD incident.” The report also examines the readiness of the National Capital Region (NCR) – which includes Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties – to respond to a WMD incident. According to the report, the NCR is a “potential target for terrorists” in a WMD attack.

“The findings of the Inspector General’s report are disturbing. We know that terrorists are training every day to launch another attack in the United States, and first line of defense must be to disrupt and prevent a successful terrorist attack. But we also have to make sure we are ready and prepared for a terrorist attack at home, whether it is from a chemical, biological , radiological or nuclear weapon,” **said Senator Cardin**.

“According to the report, only the FBI was prepared to respond to a WMD attack due to its regular training, exercises, and equipment on hand. I am concerned that ATF -- as the lead agency to respond to a WMD -- has made little progress so far in preparing for a WMD attack, and that other Justice Department components were not even aware of this designation. I am pleased that DOJ has accepted all five recommendations, and look forward to closely tracking their implementation.

“We must also improve our WMD training and response in the National Capital Region (NCR), which includes two counties in Maryland – Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. As the report indicates, the NCR is a prime target for a terrorist attack, given the number of federal facilities and employees living, working, and commuting here. The region is not yet able to fully respond to WMD attacks, which require specialized training and equipment to deal with potentially very persistent agents.”

###